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# REGIONAL AFGHAN MUNICIPALITIES PROGRAM FOR URBAN POPULATIONS – REGIONAL COMMAND NORTH

**MONTHLY REPORT: MARCH 2012**



*Photo: Business registration surveyors assist a business owner in Aybak in completing the business registration forms on March 11, 2012.*

**APRIL 15, 2012**

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by DAI.

# REGIONAL AFGHAN MUNICIPALITIES PROGRAM FOR URBAN POPULATIONS – RC NORTH

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## ABBREVIATIONS & TERMS

CLIN	Contract Line Item Number
CO	Contracts Officer
COP	Chief of Party
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
DAI	Development Alternatives Incorporated
EA	Embedded Advisor
GDMA	General Directorate of Municipal Affairs
GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
IDLG	Independent Directorate of Local Governance
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTL	Municipal Team Leader
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PAAG	Public Administration Advisory Group
PBT	Project-based Training
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
RAMP UP program)	Regional Afghan Municipalities Program for Urban Populations (USAID
RC (E,W,N,S)	ISAF Regional Command East, West, North, South
RU-N	RAMP UP North
SDAG	Service Delivery Advisory Group
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SOW	Scope of Work
TA	Technical Assistance
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government

### Terms

<i>gozar</i>	Neighborhood
<i>nahya</i>	Municipal District
<i>qaryadars</i>	village leaders
<i>wakil or kalanter</i>	<i>nahya</i> or <i>gozar</i> representative
<i>Tashkeel</i>	administrative structure of a GIRoA entity
<i>Safayi tax</i>	service charge and property tax
<i>Moustoufiat</i>	the provincial-level branch of the Ministry of Finance

## **ABOUT RAMP UP NORTH**

The purpose of the Regional Afghan Municipalities Program for Urban Populations for Regional Command North (RAMP UP North) is to create effective, responsive, democratic, transparent, accountable and gender sensitive municipal governance in the nine provinces that comprise the International Security Assistance Force's (ISAF's) Regional Command North.

RAMP UP North will: (1) increase the capacity of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) municipal officials, (2) markedly improve the delivery of municipal services to citizens in target municipalities, and (3) increase municipal capacity to enable, support, and sustain economic growth. As a result of the RAMP UP North, Afghan citizens will receive better services, understand the responsibilities of municipal leaders, play an active role in the municipal decision-making process, and see local governance structures as legitimate.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the month of March, RU-N advisors focused on supporting municipalities on the budget preparation, since municipal annual budgets were originally due to the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) and the General Directorate of Municipal Affairs (GDMA) by April 10. Though an extended deadline was not formally set, RU-N advisors worked with municipalities to finalize draft budgets early, to allow ample time to present the drafts to citizens for feedback. Public budget meetings were held in all nine municipalities this month, and RU-N advisors compiled citizens' feedback for municipal officials. The meetings, attended by a total of 728 citizens and municipal officials, were constructive and citizens were actively involved in the process.

Another focus this month was on municipal revenue generation in the form of business registration and licensing. The program progressed from the survey stage to the data entry stage, with most municipalities ready to begin issuing tax bills to businesses. By the end of the month, some 13,745 businesses had been surveyed in the five municipalities of Aybak, Faizabad, Sar-e-Pul, Pul-e-Khumri, and Taloqan. This represents an almost 65% increase over last year's numbers.



*A citizen from Mazar-e-Sharif represents district 7 and presented their feedback on the draft budget to municipal officials on March 31, 2012.*

Citizens are becoming more and more involved in municipal decision-making and RU-N continued to support this trend. Sub-project beneficiary group surveys were conducted and report cards indicated that citizens are satisfied with the services related to the RU-N round one sub-projects (trash collection and park improvement sub-projects). Citizens also continued to be actively involved in monitoring of sub-projects, as did municipal officials and RU-N embedded advisors. There were seven Service Delivery Advisory Group (SDAG) meetings facilitated by RU-N this month. SDAG members were divided into four sub-committees, which cover areas such as monitoring and evaluation, advocacy, transparency and procurement, and surveys. RU-N advisors discussed the Terms of Reference (ToR) with each sub-committee to clarify their roles and responsibilities. SDAG members continued to take more and more ownership of their activities.

## PROGRAMMATIC HIGHLIGHTS

- In terms of capacity building, RU-N advisors continued to provide technical assistance based on the budget preparation and business registration and licensing formal training workshop that took place last month. Advisors transitioned to practical training exercises based on the actual budget preparation process—assisting municipal officials with forms and bank reconciliations among other aspects of budget preparation. In addition, advisors continued to provide technical assistance on business registration and licensing.
- The round one Sustainable Service Delivery Improvement Projects continued to be implemented in cooperation with municipal officials, citizens and sub-contractors. The SDAGs and citizen beneficiaries continued to monitor sub-projects, and for the most part reported that they were satisfied with the work thus far. The Maymana women's park improvement sub-project was approved and is the final first round sub-project to get underway. Round two proposed sub-project Scopes of Work (SOWs) were completed in most municipalities, and the RU-N/Mazar



sub-project review committee provided feedback on six SOWs. The other three will be presented for review next month. A summary of the progress on sub-projects is included in this report.

- This month, RU-N has moved forward in assisting municipalities with revenue generation, and the business registration and licensing program was one major aspect of this assistance. RU-N advisors assisted municipal staff in recruiting, hiring, and training survey and data entry staff for the business registration and licensing program in five municipalities—Aybak, Faizabad, Sar-e-Pul, Pul-e-Khumri, and Taloqan. By the end of March, Sar-e-Pul municipality reported that they had completed the survey and data entry stages and were ready to begin issuing tax bills to those businesses surveyed. The other four municipalities had completed the survey phase and were making steady progress in the data entry phase. Overall, business registration surveys have increased almost 65% over last year. It is expected that all five municipalities will begin issuing tax bills and business licenses next month.
- RU-N advisors also continued intense technical assistance with municipal officials on budget preparation. This month, RU-N facilitated public budget meetings in all nine municipalities. RU-N advisors worked with municipal officials to prepare presentations on completed and proposed development projects and on the details of the 1391 draft annual budgets. A total of 728 participants attended the meetings, where municipal officials presented and RU-N advisors played a supporting role. Based on reports from the field, the exchanges among municipal officials, provincial officials, and citizens were fruitful and constructive. RU-N advisors compiled summary reports of all citizen feedback and assisted municipal officials in incorporating that feedback into the budgets. All the budgets were revised and finalized by the end of this month; however, a new budget calendar was announced (changing the cycle from twelve to nine months for this year) and RU-N advisors began to assist in adjusting the finalized budgets accordingly. The revisions are expected to be completed next month.
- The RU-N Civil Society team continued to assist embedded advisors in conducting surveys of sub-project beneficiary groups. Report cards on the sub-projects are submitted every two weeks. Based on feedback received, citizens are overwhelmingly satisfied with the progress. Also this month, several SDAG and *kalanter*s meetings were held. For instance, the SDAG in Pul-e-Khumri met on March 26 to re-select the round two sub-project after the Mayor and advisors explained that that first choice was not feasible given financial and environmental constraints. Finally, citizen engagement was greatly increased this month by the public budget meetings, where citizens were extremely active and involved.



*A RU-N advisor conducts a citizen beneficiary survey at the site of the Sar-e-Pul park improvement sub-project on March 14, 2012.*

# PROGRAMMING ACTIVITIES

## CAPACITY BUILDING

### Technical Assistance (TA)

During March, most of the TA focused on budget preparation. Some examples of assistance provided by RU-N advisors are listed below:

- Assisted the municipal revenue managers in developing a simple format for revenue reporting and for revenue projection
- Assisted the municipal revenue managers with bank reconciliations
- Assisted the municipal engineering/construction managers in compiling a comprehensive list of development projects
- Assisted the municipal revenue managers in identifying fixed and variable revenues
- Assisted municipal officials in completing required budget forms
- Assisted mayors in preparing the organizational charts (*tashkeels*)
- Assisted department heads in drafting unit-specific plans
- Assisted in compiling summary reports of citizen comments/feedback from the public budget meetings



*A RU-N advisor in Faizabad assisted the Municipal Accounting Manager with budget preparation on March 11, 2012.*

In addition, advisors continued to provide technical assistance related to the business registration and licensing program. For instance, in Sar-e-Pul, RU-N advisors worked with the Municipal Revenue Manager and the Property Officer on the coding and routing plan for business registration and licensing.

### Consultations

In March, RU-N advisors continued to meet regularly with mayors and municipal officials to offer consultations on various topics. This month, most of the consultations centered on the facilitation of public budget meetings. Advisors assisted in preparing presentations and provided talking points for municipal officials. In addition, they assisted in creating and organizing the agendas for the meetings and in facilitating the citizen groups during the meetings.

### Regional Workshops/Conferences

Toward the end of this month, RU-N advisors began preliminary preparations for the draft municipal law workshops set to occur in early April. In four municipalities—Faizabad, Pul-e-Khumri, Sar-e-Pul, and Taloqan—RU-N advisors will facilitate the workshops. In five municipalities—Aybak, Kunduz,

Maymana, Mazar-e-Sharif, and Sheberghan—RU-N advisors will play a supporting role to United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) advisors. These public workshops are set to take place on April 10 and 11.

### Functional Training / Project-based Training (PBT)

RU-N advisors provided functional training on business registration and licensing this month. For instance, advisors held a training session for 30 surveyors and data entry staff in Pul-e-Khumri and 26 surveyors in Sar-e-Pul. In Aybak, a similar training session was held for 16 male surveyors and two female data entry staff, most of whom were under 25 years old.



*RU-N facilitated a Business Registration Program training session in Sar-e-Pul on March 11, 2012.*

In addition RU-N advisors continued to utilize the Sustainable Service Delivery Improvement Projects as opportunities to provide functional training to build the capacity of both municipal officials and citizen leaders in various phases of project management.

RU-N advisors assisted municipal officials in all municipalities in the drafting of SOWs for second round sub-projects. For instance, in Mazar-e-Sharif, RU-N advisors supported the Municipal Cleaning and Greening Manager in drafting the proposed SOW for the District 3 trash collection sub-project.

### SUSTAINABLE SERVICE DELIVERY IMPROVEMENT SUB-PROJECTS

The first round sub-projects continued as normal this month. Citizens continued to monitor progress, as did municipal officials and RU-N advisors. A summary of the status of each sub-project can be found in the table below.

First Round Sustainable Service Delivery Improvement Sub-projects—Status as of March 31, 2012 by Municipality		
Municipality	Sub-project type	Status
Aybak	Central park improvement	In close out
Faizabad	District 1 and 5 trash collection	Ongoing/expected completion date: May 6
Kunduz	Trash collection	Ongoing/expected completion date: May 13
Maymana	Women's park construction	Implementation starting in April (approved 4/4/12)
Mazar-e-Sharif	District 5 trash collection	Ongoing/expected completion date: April 29
Pul-e-Khumri	Trash collection	Ongoing/expected completion date: May 16
Sar-e-Pul	Central park improvement	Ongoing/expected completion date: April 12
Sheberghan	Trash collection	Ongoing/expected completion date: April 15

Taloqan	Trash collection	Ongoing/expected completion date: May 12
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In terms of the second round of sub-projects, RU-N advisors worked to complete the proposed sub-project SOWs and the supporting documents. The proposed sub-project SOWs for six sub-projects were presented to the RU-N/Mazar sub-project review committee. Municipal Team Leaders (MTLs) were given feedback and made revisions accordingly.

Second Round Sustainable Service Delivery Improvement Sub-project Types by Municipality	
Municipality	Sub-project Type
Aybak	Construction of Public Latrines
Faizabad	Construction of Public Latrines
Kunduz	Park Improvement
Maymana	Construction of Public Latrines
Mazar-e-Sharif	Trash Collection
Pul-e-Khumri	New Park Construction
Sar-e-Pul	City Market Improvement
Sheberghan	Construction of Public Latrines
Taloqan	Park Improvement

## REVENUE GENERATION

RU-N advisors continued to assist municipal officials in five municipalities—Aybak, Faizabad, Pul-e-Khumri, Sar-e-Pul, and Taloqan—with business registration. After a workshop conducted at the RU-N Mayors' Conference in February, RU-N advisors continued to provide functional training on a regular basis to ensure that municipal officials and survey and data entry staff understood the program and processes.

By the end of March, all five municipalities had completed the survey stage. In Sar-e-Pul, all the survey forms had been uploaded into the municipal database by March 29. A summary of the progress in terms of business registration as compared to last year can be found in the table below.



*Business registration surveyors complete forms at a barber shop in Pul-e-Khumri on March 19, 2012.*

## RU-N Business Registration and Licensing Program Status Report as of March 31, 2012

Survey Start Date	Municipality	Registered Businesses and Licenses Issued Last Year (1390)	Newly Surveyed Businesses (1391)	Increase in number	% Increase over last year (surveys)	Number of forms entered into the municipal database
3/11/12	Aybak	1,395	1,924	529	38	1,442
3/12/12	Faizabad	884	2,106	1,222	138	928
3/14/12	Pul-e-Khumri	3,300	3,900	600	18	646
3/13/12	Sar-e-Pul	1,184	1,555	371	31	1,555
3/15/12	Taloqan	1,600	4,260	2,660	163	370
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>8,363</b>	<b>13,745</b>	<b>5,382</b>	<b>64.35</b>	<b>4,941</b>

## CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

### Public Meetings

As stated previously, RU-N facilitated public budget meetings in all nine municipalities in March. The table below provides details of the 728 attendees to these meetings and a summary of citizens' comments is attached to this report ([Appendix A: Citizen Feedback](#)).

Number of citizens and municipal officials attending public budget meetings by gender																				
	Aybak		Faizabad		Kunduz		Maymana		Mazar—e-Sharif		Pul-e-Khumri		Sar-e-Pul		Sheberghan		Taloqan		TOTAL	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Municipal Officials	4	0	9	0	7	0	10	2	18	27	7	0	3	0	6	0	9	0	73	29
Citizens	24	2	53	2	37	7	40	8	281	40	23	0	15	9	27	4	49	5	549	77
TOTAL	28	2	62	2	44	7	50	10	299	67	30	0	18	9	33	4	58	5	TOTAL: 728	



In addition, there were seven SDAG meetings this month in Aybak (3/1/12 and 3/14/12), Faizabad (3/1/12), Maymana (3/6/12), Mazar-e-Sharif (3/31/12—the SDAG attended the public budget meeting); Pul-e-Khumri (3/26/12), and Sheberghan (3/1/12). The primary purpose of the SDAG meetings included discussing sub-projects and the municipal draft budgets. In Pul-e-Khumri, the SDAG met to re-select the second round sub-project and chose a new park construction sub-project. The Mayor has allocated the land for the sub-project and pledged to support it. He also stated that the Municipality plans to build a public parking lot nearby, and that the lot could be used by visitors to the park as well. SDAG members agreed with the plan and decided to select the new park as their second round sub-project.

### **Women's Participation in Municipal Decision Making**

RU-N has been highly involved in efforts to increase women's participation in municipal decision making.

In addition to RU-N requesting that municipalities hire at least two female data entry staff for the business registration programs, the RU-N Civil Society staff has requested that embedded advisors work to restructure the SDAGs to encourage involvement of both women and youth. The drive to increase women's participation in the SDAGs is ongoing and updated lists of SDAG members will be provided by embedded advisors to the Civil Society staff in the near future.



*Female data entry staff worked to enter business registration forms into the municipal database in Pul-e-Khumri on March 29, 2012.*

### **Citizen Beneficiary Group Meetings and Citizen Surveys**

The active involvement of service improvement sub-project beneficiaries is viewed as key to long term sustainability. Hence, RU-N continued to facilitate the involvement of citizens in municipal activities.

For instance, RU-N embedded advisors have worked closely with the Civil Society staff to conduct citizen beneficiary surveys about every two weeks. These citizen report cards are utilized to gauge citizen satisfaction with the progress/work on sub-projects. The results indicated overwhelming citizen satisfaction with sub-projects.

A summary of some of the citizen report card results is provided below:

- In Mazar-e-Sharif, *kalanter*s (municipal district representatives) surveyed 14 citizens. All of them reported seeing the new trash collection service in action and 9 respondents, or 71%, indicated that they were “very satisfied” with the service being provided so far.
- In Kunduz, of the 81 citizens surveyed, 42 (52%) indicated that the trash collection service thus far was “excellent”, while 25 (31%) indicated that the service was “good”.

- Regarding the Sar-e-Pul park improvement sub-project, of the 41 citizens surveyed, 21 (51%) indicated that the quality of work being completed by the contractor was “good” or “very good”.

In addition to the citizen reports cards, the beneficiaries, including SDAG members and some *kalanter*s, continued to be active monitors of the sub-projects. For instance, the Head of the SDAG in Pul-e-Khumri follows alongside the trash collection contractor on a daily basis to monitor the work. He reports back to citizens and municipal officials on the progress.



*The Head of the Pul-e-Khumri SDAG takes an active role in monitoring the trash collection sub-project.  
Photo: March 15, 2012*

## PLANNED APRIL ACTIVITIES

RU-N advisors will continue to assist municipalities on budget preparation. Although budgets were finalized in March, IDLG has announced that the annual budget for 1391 must be on a 9-month, rather than 12-month, cycle. RU-N advisors will assist municipal officials in accounting for this change before submission to IDLG for approval.

At the request of GDMA, RU-N advisors will also facilitate and/or assist UNDP in facilitating public workshops on the draft municipal law on April 10 and 11 in all nine municipalities.

Business registration and licensing work will continue and data entry will be completed. RU-N advisors will also assist in the issuing of tax bills to the businesses surveyed.

Capacity building will remain the focus of the program, and RU-N/Mazar advisors are working on compiling/designing training materials and curricula to be presented in the near future.

In terms of Sustainable Service Delivery Improvement Sub-projects, RU-N embedded advisors will assist municipal officials in completing the proposed SOWs and all supporting documents in order to submit them for program/USAID approval. In addition, the first round sub-project in Maymana will enter the implementation phase with a bid opening and evaluation.

The Civil Society staff will continue to collect data for citizen report cards and share results with mayors. They will also continue to work with SDAGs to guide them in their new designations as sub-committee members. In addition, Civil Society and Communications staff will facilitate public outreach activities related to sub-projects.



## **APPENDIX A: CITIZEN FEEDBACK**

### ***RAMP UP – North***

#### ***Public Meetings—Municipal Annual Budgets***

#### ***Summary Report of Citizen Feedback***

##### **Aybak (3/11/12)**

- Based on the budget allocations for implementation of municipal development projects, the SDAG and public participants requested that Aybak municipality implement the city master plan, especially distribution of land for construction of houses. Fortunately, their request was accepted by the Mayor and included in the 1391 annual budget.
- Construction of culverts in specified locations of Aybak was proposed by the SDAG and citizens. As a result, the Mayor and PAAG members accepted the suggestion for inclusion in the 1391 annual budget.
- The Secretary of the SDAG requested the establishment of a committee for follow up of *Safayi* tax collection from government and private sector properties. As a result, the proposed committee formation was accepted by PAAG members, and they will start these activities based on their action plan.

##### **Faizabad (3/12/12)**

- Citizens requested building a center for religious ceremonies. The Municipality explained that they must finalize the city master plan first, and then they can select a location for the center and build it.
- The citizens requested adding a budget for drinking water. This will be added to the annual budget.
- Citizens requested construction of canals throughout the city. The Municipality stated that the Ministry of Urban Development will do this.
- Citizens requested graveling of streets. The Municipality stated that the budget has an allocation for this, and it will be done in the coming year.
- The citizens requested construction of a public latrine in the old city. The Municipality announced that RAMP UP – North is in the process of planning and designing for this. RU-N plans to complete this project in their second round—in the next few months.

##### **Kunduz (3/18/12)**

- In the draft budget, some areas were identified to receive road graveling. At first, citizens objected to one of the areas (Dawra) to be graveled. Municipal officials explained that it is a newly-established area, and has not yet received any assistance in the form of projects from the Municipality. For that reason, the area was a priority area for graveling. The citizen participants, upon hearing the explanation, accepted the project and withdrew their objections.

- Citizens requested that construction of one square or roundabout (Jada-e- Azadi) be canceled and that the budget for that be re-allocated to more road construction. Municipal officials explained that the roundabout was necessary for traffic control and to reduce auto accidents in that area. The citizens, upon hearing the explanation, accepted the project as originally planned.
- People requested that some main roads be paved (Higher Education Street, a 40- meter wide ring road and the main road of Sari Dawra). Municipal officials explained that the municipal budget did not allow for such expensive projects right now, but some international donors have identified the roads for paving, using donor funds.
- Citizens identified some streets to be graveled. Municipal officials explained that they have included road graveling in the budget without specifying roads. After budget approval, they will consult citizens again to prioritize the streets.

### **Maymana (3/25/12)**

- Citizens stated that the Municipality should purchase some vehicles for better management of waste in the city. This will be added to the budget.
- Citizens requested that a bank branch or kiosk be placed inside the Municipality, so citizens could pay their *Safayi* taxes there—making the process a more transparent one. The Municipality will request this from higher authorities.
- The citizens asked that the city master plan be included in the budget. Municipal officials explained that this process requires a huge budget, and the Ministry of Urban Development is responsible for the plan.
- The budget allows for some parts of the city to be graveled in 1391 and citizens asked that they prioritize the locations through a survey, so the most damaged roads of city would be considered first. This will be considered.

### **Mazar-e-Sharif (3/31/12)**

- One female citizen stated that the city needs better coverage for door-to-door trash collection. The Mayor replied that in 1391, the municipal trash collection will cover 7 of 10 districts (planned). He added that wheelbarrow trash collection interferes with municipal service. Young boys are being paid to take trash from houses, but they are dumping it in a neighboring community. Even if the Municipality places trash bins throughout the city, these wheelbarrow boys will use them to dump the trash they have collected from homes, causing a bigger problem. The Mayor emphasized the designated dumping sites and pleaded with citizens not to throw trash in illegal dumping sites.
- One male citizen requested that paving streets needs to be prioritized based on need and population. Also a female student requested asphalted streets in her area and asked if there are any plans in the budget for this.
- A female school principal objected to the building of public parking in green areas of the city and requested that the green areas be expanded, not parking. Many other citizens agreed, and the Mayor stated that they will remove the plan to build parking lots based on this feedback.

### **Pul-e-Khumri (3/29/12)**

- Citizens requested the construction of a big hall/ huge mosque for women's religious ceremonies.
- Citizens asked that the Municipality purchase a front-back loader and a heavy duty truck to ensure sustainable trash collection in four municipal districts.
- Citizens requested the construction of three underground passages in three parts of the city, particularly in places where there are large numbers of school children. This will save school children from traffic accidents, and shops can be constructed in those underground passages. These shops would pay leasing fees to the Municipality, thereby increasing municipal revenue.
- Citizens requested household registration in District 3. This will increase municipal revenue and, at the same time, assist citizens in obtaining their property deeds from the courts.
- Citizens requested the construction of a surrounding wall for the graveyard in District 3.
- Citizens requested the expansion of the trash collection project to District 1.
- Drinking water is a high-priority need in Districts 1, 2, 3, and 4.
- Citizens requested construction of a retaining wall and graveling of roads in Districts 1, 2, and 3.
- Citizens demanded equality in the distribution of services, and equality in development regardless of any political, racial, tribal, or geographical characteristics.
- The Mayor agreed to include most of the above in this year's budget.

### **Sar-e-Pul (3/28/12)**

- One of the citizens from District 1 asked why the Municipality is not paying attention to the side streets there. They didn't allocate any portion of the budget for this. He expressed that the citizens are fed up with the current condition of these streets and that at least eight of his neighbors are considering selling their homes due to the poor street condition. Municipal officials noted the concerns.
- A university student, Wahid, expressed concerns over the sustainability of projects. He noted that though many projects were completed last year, the maintenance is not adequate. He asked that the Municipality allocate part of the budget to conduct more public outreach to educate citizens about sustaining the projects and that these projects do not belong to the Mayor, but to citizens. Citizens are responsible for the upkeep.
- A woman stated that even though the Municipality had plans for paving roads last year, it was all in vain and was not done. Sar-e-Pul, she added, is the only city in Afghanistan with no paved roads. She asked that this year the Municipality make sure to include paving of roads in the budget.

### **Sheberghan (3/1/12)**

- According to Sheberghan Municipality, this was the first time civil society got involved in budget development and project prioritizing.
- Citizens objected to at least three projects. One of these projects was the destruction of a current municipal building and the construction of a business market to replace it. Citizens stated that Sheberghan already has several business markets, and instead they need to refurbish the existing municipal wedding hall so that it can compete with the wedding halls of the private sector.
- Citizens identified some streets that need graveling.
- One of the community elders stated that officials should not mind when citizens are made aware of how they have allocated funds for projects. He added that citizens need to reflect on failures and successes, and the process should be transparent.

### **Taloqan (3/13/12)**

- In the budget some of the *kalanter*s mentioned that the Municipality should allocate funds for repairing damaged roads in all four districts of Taloqan.
- The *kalanter*s suggested that the Municipality must construct public latrines, especially near mosques.
- All the *kalanter*s requested that a slaughterhouse be constructed outside the city (as there is currently one in the city center). Municipal officials stated that an international donor is planning such a project.
- The households should be registered by the Municipality to generate revenue through taxes.

## **APPENDIX B: RU-N ONE-PAGERS**

Each month RU-N plans to highlight particular achievements, successes, or unique aspects of the program. The following pages contain two such stories.



**USAID**  
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# AFGHANISTAN

USAID 50 ANNIVERSARY

## Transparency in Action: RU-N Sponsors a Public Budget Meeting in Mazar-e-Sharif

**More than 300 citizens of Mazar-e-Sharif attended a public meeting to offer feedback on the 1391 municipal budget.**



*A citizen from Mazar-e-Sharif's District 10 addresses the Mayor during the question and answer session at the public meeting on March 31, 2012.*

**"The fact that the Mayor and his team have gathered you here and are reporting on the budget proves their desire to be accountable..."**

**—Dr. Mohammad Afzal Hadid, Chairperson of the Balkh Provincial Council**

Telling Our Story  
U.S. Agency for International Development  
Washington, DC 20523-0000  
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

March 31, 2012 – RAMP UP-North sponsored a public budget meeting in Mazar-e-Sharif with municipal officials, provincial officials, over 300 citizens, and local, national, and international media outlets in attendance. This is the second annual budget that the Municipality has presented at a public meeting to citizens for their feedback.

RU-N began its assistance on annual budget preparation following the RU-N Mayors' Conference in February. RU-N advisors have been providing intense technical assistance to Mayors and municipal officials, and the draft annual budget was ready to be presented to citizens well ahead of the official deadline of April 10, ensuring ample time to incorporate citizens' suggestions into the final draft.

Muhammad Yunus Muqeem, Mayor of Mazar, and Dr. Muhammad Afzal Hadid, Chairman of Balkh Provincial Council opened the meeting. Dr. Hadid stated, "My expectation from citizens is to contribute and to help the Municipality. Because according to the famous proverb, you cannot clap with one hand... The fact that the Mayor and his team have gathered you here and are reporting on the budget also proves their desire to be accountable to you."

The Cleaning and Greening, Revenue, Construction, and Accounting Managers then presented various aspects of the draft budget and highlighted the municipal projects completed last year as well as the planned projects for this year. In a question and answer session, one citizen addressed the issue of accountability by asking the Mayor to provide information on how much citizen feedback was included in last year's budget after a similar meeting was held.

Participants then broke into ten groups, by municipal district, to generate more feedback. RU-N advisors facilitated the group discussions and noted citizens' suggestions, which were then presented in a plenary session.

One of the main concerns of citizens was the paving of streets. Several citizens commented that a prioritizing process with citizens' input must take place based mainly on the most need and most densely populated areas. During the group discussions, some *kalanfers* and citizens suggested giving all responsibility for asphaltting roads to one district head, who would be the point of contact for citizens to identify the high-priority areas and report any issues with road maintenance. The Mayor agreed and said that he would work to implement it. He added, "We are hoping to pave all the side roads in Mazar within the next three years."

A citizen from a women's group stated that the door-to-door trash collection needs to be expanded to include more than just the districts currently covered. The Mayor explained that next year's budget includes expansion of the trash collection to seven districts in total. The woman then added, "I suggest [we] promote a recycling culture. Bottles and plastic bags are everywhere. By recycling we can reuse some parts of trash, and we can also keep the city clean."

A female school principal from District 7 stated concerns over plans to build more public parking, and asked instead that the Mayor consider expanding green areas.

Citizen feedback will be compiled by RU-N advisors and the Mayor promised to consider all the comments, stating that if he could not include citizens' requests this year, they would be added for next year.

The meeting, which was facilitated with support from UNDP, was deemed a success by citizens, officials, and RU-N advisors alike.



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### ***RUN Supports Municipalities on Budget Preparation***



Draft Budget Presentation to Kunduz SDAG Members by municipal officials.



Run Team Working with Municipal Official on Budget in Faizabad

...Last year, we were the last municipality to submit a budget to GDMA. This year, we are ahead of most municipalities and we are going to be the first municipality in the country to submit our budget."

"—Account Manager of Faizabad Municipality.

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Nine municipalities in Northern Afghanistan have made significant improvements to their budget preparation process through technical support from RAMP-UP North (RU-N). Municipal officials, with RU-N assistance, are expanding public participation and incorporating feedback from citizens and civil society into their draft budgets. Municipal officials are also receiving RU-N support to improve the accuracy and timeliness of budget submissions. RU-N has increased their support to this key municipal process following a request from the General Directorate of Municipal Affairs (GDMA) at the Mayor's Conference in Mazar-e-Sharif, which was facilitated by RU-N in February 2012. During the conference, GDMA expressed concerns with the current municipal budget preparation practices, as budgets are often late or do not meet budget requirements. GDMA had been forced to return incorrect municipal budgets to municipalities for revisions, which can cause delays in the implementation of municipal activities.

RU-N has responded to this request by providing strategic support to the municipal offices through Embedded Advisors that work daily to strengthen municipal capacity. These advisors have assisted the municipalities in establishing Budget Committees, composed of municipal officials responsible for planning the coming year's budget. Previously, seven of the nine northern municipalities (Faizabad, Pul-e-Khumri, Taloqan, Sar-e-Pul, Sheberghan, Aybak and Maimana) had yet to form such coordination groups to prepare their annual budget. In the Faizabad municipality, for example, RU-N support has led to considerable improvements in municipal capacity to manage the budget preparation process. Last year, Faizabad submitted its budget over a year after the deadline. This year, the municipality is ahead of schedule, said the Account Manager in Faizabad Municipality, Nematullah: "We did not have a budget committee last year - one of the officials worked at home to prepare the budget. Last year, we were the last municipality to submit a budget to GDMA. This year, we are ahead of most municipalities and we are hoping to be the first municipality in the country to submit our budget."

RU-N support has also been critical in enabling municipalities to increase public involvement in the budget drafting process. For the first time in over a decade in the Sheberghan municipality, citizens and government officials sat down together on February 29 to discuss priorities for the upcoming municipal budget. Following the meeting, the Head of the Retirement Union and the Jowzjan Civil Society Network, Hassan Hashimi, said that, "Citizens should be consulted, because municipal revenue comes from their payments [taxes]."

Through RU-N support, municipalities have increased their ability to produce accurate budgets that will meet GDMA requirements. "GDMA will receive budgets on time this year from most of the municipalities in the North because of RU-N support," said Kabir Nazari, the Director of the Public Administration Unit at RU-N, "Furthermore, we are creating a new process in which different members of the Budget Committee will have different assignments. This process is the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that includes the budget calendar, budget approval process and the closing of accounts. This process will remain in municipalities beyond RU-N involvement. Overall, the SOP introduces a step-by-step process to develop an accurate and timely budget."